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REPAIRING VIOLINS
AND OTHER MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

HOW TO REPAIR VIOLINS

AND OTHER MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

With Diagrams

BY
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PREFACE.

ALMOST every music seller who deals in small goods keeps what is known as a "repair book." And at the end of the year when the income and expenditure sides are added up, although the former may be large and the profits satisfactory, somehow the "ex.'s" add up to quite a large figure. Many dealers do their own repairs: some, again, do only a few of the smaller ones, while there are a great number who undertake none. I venture to say, that the profits of the former, exceed those of the latter, who sends them all out, by over fifty per cent. This shows that attention may well be given to this branch of the business.

The object of these few chapters is, in the first place, to give beginners an idea of what they may do if they try, and also to help those, who at present only do a few of their own repairs. One man does not like to try to mend an instrument because he is afraid he may make it worse than it was before. Another, again, thinks he can do it all right; sets about it in the wrong way and spoils it. Drawings have been put in a few cases to aid in understanding the subject better. But, after reading the book through, the greatest help of all will be the exercise of common sense.

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HOW TO REPAIR VIOLINS

AND OTHER MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE VIOLIN.

**Jarring—fitting bridge—pegs—tail-piece—
sound-post—finger-board, etc.**

OF all musical instruments the most important is the violin. It contains so many separate parts that must be carefully looked after, and each one must be exact for the instrument to be in thoroughly good order. You find there is something jarring; how can it be put right?

Take the violin in your left hand and

gently tap the belly all round close to the edge with your knuckle.

You may hear the jar all the time, but if the glue has given way in any part you will at once be able to tell exactly where it is, as it will be so very much louder when you tap just on the faulty part. Try the back in the same way. If you find the place, try to raise the back or belly a little and you will see how far the glue has given.

If it is only an inch or so, get some very fine glue, boil it down until very thin, and insert some with the aid of a thin pen-knife blade. Then cramp it down well. Before the glue gets dry, get a rag, dip it in hot water and rub off the superfluous glue, otherwise if left till dry and hard, when removed it would bring the varnish away with it. If the violin is quite sound, then look elsewhere for the jar. The knot in the tail-piece may be just touching the wood, and this is a very frequent offender.

The end of a string may be touching another in the head of the violin: a peg may fit at the wide end but not at the thin one: the feet of the bridge may not be quite close

down on the belly, or the bass bar which runs along inside a violin under the G string may be loose. You can find if this is so by putting the end of a pen or pencil through the *f* hole and pressing on the bar whilst picking a string. If the jar stops while doing so, you have found the place, and it will probably be too big a job for you to undertake, as the whole belly ought to come off. But this does not often occur.

The bridge is a very important part. Some people buy a bridge, put it straight on and think it must be right. Very rarely does a bridge fit properly straight away. In fitting a new one, first of all select a bridge of medium thickness: too thick a bridge will make the tone heavy and dull. Slacken the strings and set the bridge up with the feet exactly between the two cuts in the *f* holes, and leaning towards the tailpiece slightly. Now tighten the strings a little, and this will bring the bridge quite straight. Hold the violin with both hands in front of you, and compare the curve on the top of the bridge with the curve at the thick end of the finger-board. By this

means you will be able to judge how much you must take off the top of it. The best way to reduce it is to file off both sides and bring the top to a point, and keep on doing it this way until you get it down to its proper level.

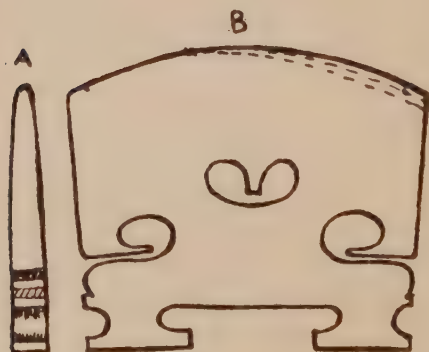


Diagram No. 1.

The finished bridge should be slightly pointed at the top (see A in Diagram No. 1). Mark out the exact spot for each string to go in with a pencil. The G, D and A might have a slight hole made to keep the string from

moving from side to side. The pressure of the E usually makes its own mark. The bridge must be so formed as to raise the G string a little higher than the E (see B in Diagram No. 1). The latter being so much tighter than the former, does not need to be so far off the finger-board. The G string ought to be about quarter of an inch off the finger-board at the thick end. But, of course, violins vary a little. After getting the shape right and cut down to the proper height, look at the two feet and see if they touch everywhere. If not they must be made to do so, by scraping with a knife blade. Do not *cut* it, but scrape with the blade at right angles. I do not recommend a file as it very often takes too much off and does so unevenly.

New Pegs.—The same remark applies to pegs as well as bridges as regards new ones fitting straight away. They very rarely do. A peg ought to be as tight in the larger hole as in the smaller one. First select a peg that fits as nearly as you can get it. Then push it in the hole and turn it vigorously backwards and forwards, pressing it in all the time. Now

withdraw it and you will see a bright ring round where it fits and nothing where it does not. Scrape it carefully with a knife until the bright place occurs all round. This must be at both ends, the wide and the narrow. The hole in the peg ought to appear near the centre of the opening in the neck. If a peg sticks at all and can only be turned in jerks, it ought to be rubbed evenly with very fine sand paper (No. 1) and chalked. It is a mistake to file a peg, as it makes it so very uneven. If you have the choice of pegs left to you, always use an ebony one, as stained ones are very inferior. When scraping a stained one the white wood soon appears and will look very bad unless inked to make it black again. Of course, this last remark refers only to black ones, as boxwood and rosewood pegs are almost always solid.

Tail-piece.—Fixing the tail-piece is not very difficult. Take a piece of gut (which buy for the purpose) and pass both ends through the holes so that a loop is formed to go over the end pin. Notice the length required and tie a knot, the same as you would when doing

up a parcel; tie another one on top of the first and then cut off the two ends close up. Now strike a match and burn the two ends so that the gut swells out and forms a small hard knot. You will then find that when the strain is on it, these two knots prevent the gut from becoming untied. The end of the tail-piece ought to come exactly to the end of the violin.

Setting a Sound-post.—This is a rather difficult operation for the beginner, but after a little practice it can be performed quite easily. First of all you must get the fallen one out. Hold the violin so that the sound-post rolls down to the side: then jump it until you see it lying on the inside curve next to the *f* hole. Then turn the violin gently over on to its face and raise it above your head, and the sound-post ought to roll on to the *f* hole and, in many cases, drop out. If it only lies over the hole it can be pulled out with a pencil or piece of wire.

Now that you have got it out, the thing is to get it set again. You will see a little hole in the side of it. Take your sound-post setter and push the thin end in this hole. See A in

Diagram No. 2. Now be very careful. Put it in through the *f* hole on the E string side where it is widest. Hold it in a good position so that by looking through the hole you can see just what you are doing. Carefully place the

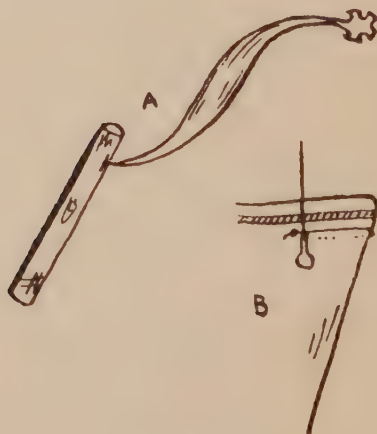


Diagram No. 2.

top of the sound-post a little behind the foot of the bridge under the E string. A line drawn down from the string through the instrument should come down the back of the bridge and the front of the sound-post.

Having got the top in the right place, draw the bottom towards its place directly under the top. It will not be straight. Now withdraw the setter, and put the other end in. If in the same hole, it will be to pull the bottom of the post into place. If in the other *f* hole it will be to push it gently. In either case, first put the round curve round the bottom of the post; then slip your hand down so that the thumb and forefinger which hold it rest on the belly. Now gently work it away from, or towards you, as required, working only with the finger muscles; on no account move your hand off the instrument. But by pressing the palm of the hand on the side, it steadies the fingers and prevents too sudden movement, which would at once bring the post down again. Having once grasped the idea, practice will soon make perfect. But do not be disheartened if you do not do it in the first few attempts. Persevere until you have done it, and the next time you will find it come much easier.

You can usually tell if it is quite upright by looking through the *f* holes. But for those

who are at all doubtful, I recommend the following. Let the strings down gently and pull out the end-pin. Hold the instrument up to your eye, and by looking through the hole you will be able to satisfy yourself at once as to whether it is straight or not. When trying to get the sound-post out of a violin, if you try to stick it first with the setter, great care must be exercised not to let it slip, as in doing so, the *f* holes are liable to get damaged.

Finger-board.—In reglueing this part, great care is necessary in getting it in the exact place that it originally occupied. Before putting the new glue on, first of all scrape off all the old. Otherwise it will be very uneven, and the old glue is not a good ground for the new to hold to. See that it comes right up to the nut, and then either cramp it or tie it up with string. Examine it again after tying to see that it is quite correct, because it is often easier to glue a new one on than to get an old one off properly. Rub the outside glue off, about ten minutes after tying it up.

If the neck of a violin should become loose,

great care must be exercised in mending it. All the old glue must be removed before applying the new. All the strings and pegs should be removed to give greater freedom of action. When you have glued the neck in again, take the violin up and hold it on a level with your eye, so that you can look along the edge of the back and then on to the scroll. The edge of the back should continue in a straight line with the point on the side of the scroll. You can tell, to a certain extent, if great care has been bestowed on a violin or not by the maker. Place a penny anywhere on the ribs between the projecting edges of back and front. If the violin is well made, the penny will fit the same all round it. If badly made, it will fit easily in one place, while in another will perhaps scarcely go in. It ought to be the same exactly all round. Never varnish a violin with ordinary bought ready-made-up stuff. Better buy it from a violin maker. When cramping any part of a violin, it is always best to use the wooden cramps sold especially for the purpose. They are quite inexpensive, costing about sixpence each.

A word about strings. Always try and get them to suit each other. Do not put on a very thin E, thick A and very thick D. If you have a thin E, try and match it with a thin A, and not make the difference show so much. It is a great mistake to have the E too thin. Some players have it so because it is so much easier to pull up. They sacrifice the tone by so doing.

A violin ought always to be kept in a case, and so avoid changes in the atmosphere.

These remarks all apply to the viola, 'cello and double bass also.

A violin E string always holds better when put on as shown in B, Diagram No. 2. There is no chance of the knot slipping, and the point of resistance is distributed.

CHAPTER II.

THE BOW.

Rehairing—Screw—Tip.

I MUST now devote a few lines to the bow. I do not intend to lay down any rules that will apply to what constitutes a good bow or a bad one, my object being to teach how to repair them, not how to make them. You must judge the quality to a great extent by the price. There are many repairs needed to be done to bows. Most important is "rehairing." This requires a little patience but is not at all difficult. First of all, undo the bow screw and take the "nut" off. Then pull the nickel piece A (Diagram No. 4) forward, slip it off the hair, and put it

to one side. Next, underneath the old hair inside where the nickel ring was, you will find a thin wedge of wood. Gently take this out with a pen-knife. It can be used again if removed intact. Now put your thumb on the pearl slide B, and press it firmly out. It ought to move easily, but sometimes has a knack of refusing to budge. Insert a blade point at C very carefully, and that will do it. Take it right off, and then try to pull the hair out. Be very careful to save the little wedge which has been used to keep it in. As regards the tip: lift the hair up and gently ease the wedge out at that end. When both ends are out clean the holes out, and remove any bits of resin that may be left inside them. Now for the new hair. Select a clean white ring of it, and also get ready the following articles: a glass of water, a very small screw-driver (or large bradawl), a comb about three inches long, a piece of resin about the size of your little finger-nail, a box of matches, a piece of strong thread and a penknife. We begin by putting the hair in the tip first. Uncoil the ring of hair, and with the handle of

the knife chip away all the red wax from the end, leaving the little hard end exposed. Lay the bow on a table or counter after chipping off the hard wax, and put the hard end into the empty hole (see Diagram No. 3). Now take the wedge that came out with the old

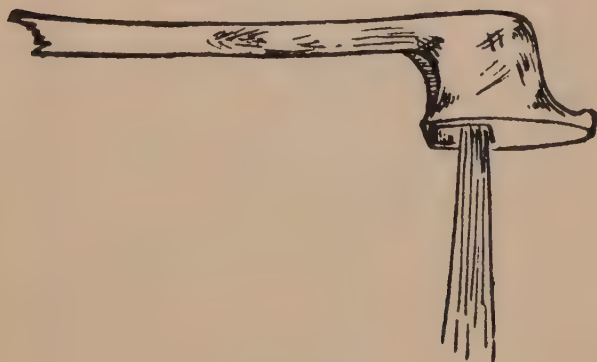


Diagram No. 3.

hair and press it firmly into the hole in front of the hair. That will flatten the strands out and keep them in position. Take care to have the bow lying on its back and quite straight up. A little variation to the right or the left may cause it to slip and break, and a bow

broken at the tip can *never* be satisfactorily repaired. When pressing the wedge in, hold the tip between the thumb and forefinger of the left hand to steady it. It is advisable to test it now to see if it will hold: pull it gently at first until you see if the wedge moves. If it does not, then it will do. The second operation is to wet the hair.

Get somebody to hold the bow with the hair towards you and the tip in the air, and continue to comb it towards yourself until it works quite free of knots, etc., catching it in the left hand after each combing. When all the knots, etc., are out, dip the comb in water and comb again, holding the comb so that after passing through it, the hair passes between your first and second fingers. This process straightens all the hairs and by damping them makes them stretch a little. After about three minutes' wet-combing it ought to be wet enough. Now take the bow-nut and remove the screw. Then put it in its proper position, sliding it towards the tip as far as it will go. Now please follow the diagram closely. Draw the hair over so as to gauge

the length it ought to be, and hold it close over the nut. Pull it fairly tight, and just over where it crosses the hole A (Diagram No. 5), tie a piece of thread or cotton very tightly (twice round, and then two or three knots). Cut off the short end of hair beyond this, leaving a quarter of an inch beyond the

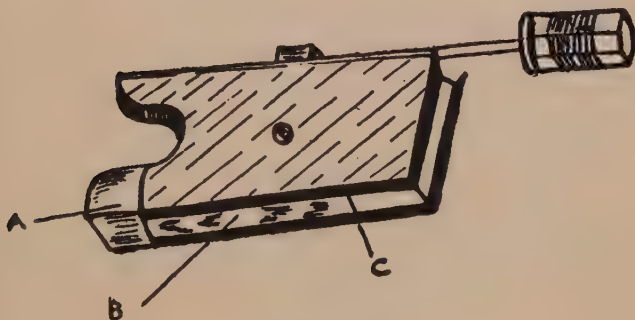


Diagram No. 4.

knot. Next put a bit of resin on an odd piece of wood and melt it with a lighted match. When the resin is all running, rub the little end of the hair in it vigorously, so as to get the resin all in amongst the hairs, and then round it with your finger. Now take the ring (Diagram No. 6, Fig. A), and slide it up the

hair, leaving it near the tip until wanted. Great care must now be taken to put the hair in the other end the right way, so that each hair stretches straight from tip to nut. If you look at Diagram 6 you will get an idea as to how it must be done. First comb the hair

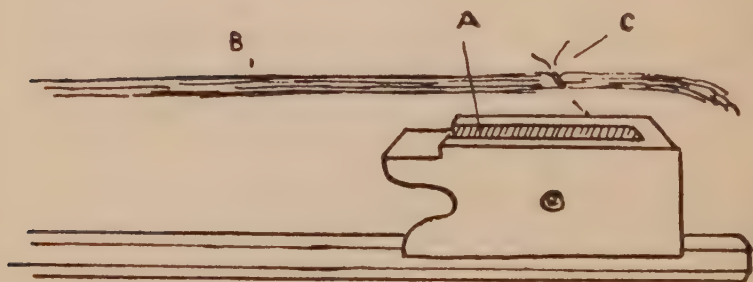


Diagram No. 5.

through twice so as to have it quite right, and hold it near the end in the left hand. Notice that the hair goes round the wedge in the form of a loop. Take the nut off the bow and put it in a position so as to be able to press the wedge into the hole in front of the hair. Now put the nut in its proper place, and put the

screw in so as to hold it firm. Replace the pearl slide, and take care not to jam any of the hair at the side in with it. Next bring the nickel ring along the hair and push it into its place. There only remains now to replace

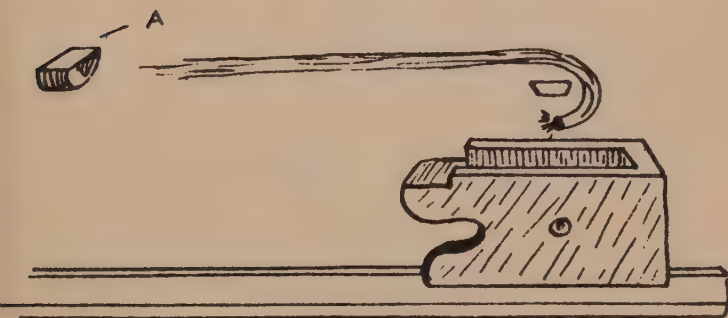


Diagram No. 6.

the wedge inside the ring and under the hair. Arrange the hairs out flat before finally pressing the wedge in. The hair now looks anything but even. Get a long piece of wood, about three or four inches wide and a little longer than the bow, and fix three French

nails in it, so that you can rest the bow on it as in the Diagram No. 7. When the hair is



Diagram No. 7.

dry and the bow taken off the board, you will find it come quite straight and even. If one or two hairs sag at all, pull them out close to the end.

New Screw.—It is an easy matter to put a new screw in, but it is inadvisable to put a new one into the old piece which is screwed into the nut. The thread is most probably worn and would soon go wrong again. If working tightly a drop of oil would soon put it right.

New Ivory Tip.—In putting a new tip to a bow, take the rough piece sold for the purpose, and file it down until it is about as thick as brown paper. It will then bend easily. Keep one side quite smooth, and the one to be glued rather rough so as to hold better. Glue it and tie it on to the tip tightly, with plenty of string, taking care to get it bent over the shape of the tip so as to touch all over. Put it on one side to get quite hard. It is advisable to give it a day to set. When quite dry and hard it ought to be filed down. But it is advisable to cut the hole in the middle out first, so that if it should loosen the tip it will not

matter so much as it would if the sides were smoothed off. The centre piece can be cut out with a very fine knife blade, and then trimmed off with a very small file. To polish the surface, get a piece of sheepskin or "soldier's belt," put some wet whitening on, and rub the tip vigorously on it, and when rubbed finally with the palm of the hand it will be found quite bright.

A bow should never be put away with the hair screwed up tight. Always let it down first.

CHAPTER III.

BANJO, MANDOLIN AND GUITAR.

THE next article I am going to deal with is the banjo. There being so many in use, repairs are often required.

In putting a new peg in, the remarks in Chapter I *re* violin pegs apply. Always turn the strings over the peg as shown in Diagram No. 8. The most important thing in connection with a banjo is the vellum or head. The way to put a new one in is as follows. First take off all the brackets, then lift the head off, and take the wire out that runs all round the edge. Now take a new vellum three or four inches more in diameter than the banjo is—I always make it four. Soak this in water

until it is quite limp. But before doing so, notice which is the smoother side, as it will come uppermost. Now lay it across the rim of the head, leaving an equal amount hanging over all round.

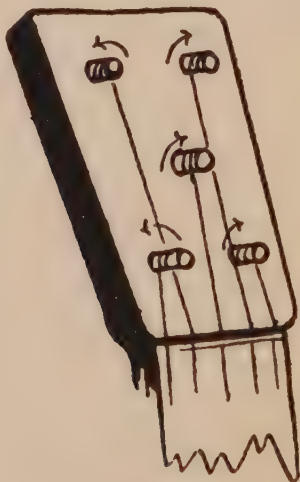


Diagram No. 8.

Put the wire over it, and press it down about half an inch equally all round. Now comes the difficult part. The nickel rim which goes on the top must be put over it all, and the

edge of the vellum drawn up *inside* it all round. This is very awkward to do, as by the time you get round it, you perhaps find that the part you pulled through first has slipped out again. When it is all pulled through on

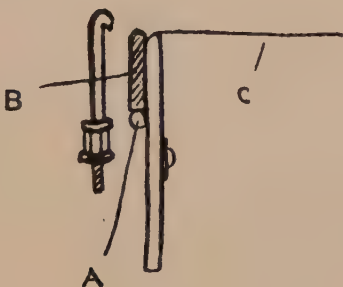


Diagram No. 9.

the inside, carefully put one bracket on, so that the screw *just* bites. Then put another on the opposite side in a similar way. Now one more on each side between the first two. Gradually tighten these four by about two turns each all round. After going round twice, put another bracket on between each of the first four, and tighten them so that they

pull exactly even all round. Now gradually tighten each one, never giving more than two turns to any one at a time. This will bring the rim down gradually and evenly. Keep on until you get the rim down to nearly the level of the vellum. See Diagram No. 9. A is the (section of) wire which goes round inside vellum; B, section of nickel rim which we are pulling down, and C, the vellum. When you have got it down so far, hang the head up in a dry place and leave it until the next day. When quite dry, take a *very* sharp penknife with a good point and cut away the frill from off the top. Be very careful not to cut the vellum. To avoid doing so, bear on it with the blunt back of the blade. The slightest notch may break right across the head and undo all your previous work.

When you have got it all carefully cut off, gradually tighten all the brackets; two or three turns each, ought to be all that is necessary. But never make the vellum stand higher than the rim. If this happens, there is danger of the tops of the brackets cutting the vellum. When reheading, I prefer to take out

the neck of the banjo, as it is then easier to get to work.

When putting a new bridge on a banjo take care to get it in its right place. To find this, put the bridge in where you *think* it is right. Now tune the instrument up and put your finger on the twelfth fret of the first or second

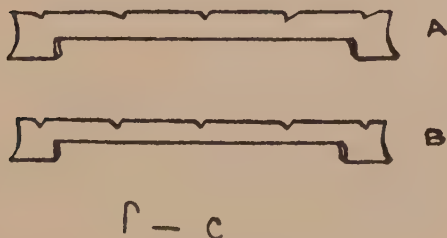


Diagram No. 10.

string. The note ought to be exactly the same above as below. The twelfth fret exactly divides the string. If the string between the twelfth and the bridge is sharper than between one and twelve, then the bridge is not close enough to the tail-piece. Move it gradually in that direction until the string on

both sides of the twelfth strikes exactly the same note. The bridge is then in the right place. The holes or notches for the strings on a bridge ought to be cut as in A of Diagram No. 10, not as in B. In A one side is straight so as to hold the string in its place. In B there is no control.

Before putting a new bridge on, it is advisable to treat it in the following manner. Make a small hole in each foot underneath, and rub some resin into it. If the feet are only scratched and rubbed with powdered resin, it will act almost as well. This prevents the bridge from slipping. Sometimes it is very difficult to get the thumb string to go up the tube; it seems to stick somewhere. If you bend the end over (see C in Diagram No. 10), you will have no further trouble.

Mandolin and Guitar.—There is not much to say about mandolin repairs. In putting on new strings be very careful not to get a “kink” in them, or they will break before reaching the required pitch. If any of the ribs should come apart, insert some fine glue in the crack with a thin pen-knife blade, and tie

string round the instrument for an hour or two until it sets. If the cogs of the machine-head work very stiffly, a very small drop of oil will soon put them right. Generally speaking, oil should *never* be applied to cogs, but in this case, the smallness of the quantity will prevent any ill effects.

The same applies to the machine on a guitar. Be careful, when putting a new pin into the tail-piece, not to make it too small. That causes jarring, and the string is never safe; also do not have it too tight. In forcing a tight peg in, one is in danger of splitting the belly. If the bridge that the strings come over is too sharp, the strings when tightened will snap. Remarks on fitting a violin peg apply to this instrument also.

STRINGS.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
E	A	D	G				Violin
D	B	G	C	(Thumb) G			5 Banjo
D	B	G	D	C	(Thumb) G		6 „
D	B	G	D	C	G	G	7 „
E	B	G	D	A	E		Guitar
E	A	D	G				Mandolin
A	D	G	C				Viola
A	D	G	C				'Cello
G	D	A					D. Bass
Violin	E			A		D	
	<i>same as</i>			<i>same as</i>			
	Banjo 2nd			Banjo 3rd			
	Guitar 1st			Guitar 2nd		Guitar 3rd	
				Viola 1st		Viola 2nd	

Occasionally the sixth string on a six-string banjo is tuned to low G.

CHAPTER IV.

MELODEON AND CONCERTINA.

BOTH these instruments are popular favorites, and instructions as to their repair will no doubt prove acceptable. To put a new spring in a melodeon it is not necessary to withdraw the wire that runs through all the keys and acts as a hinge. Unscrew the key end of the melodeon, and inside, at the ends of the reed plates, you will find two flat-headed screws. Undo these, and the keys on the outside will lift off. You will then see the spring-chambers open before you. The shape of a melodeon spring is shown in A, Diagram No. 11. The little projection is wedged into

the upper part of the chamber, and the curve at the bottom works in a small groove. In extracting the old piece part will probably fall out, but the top piece will have to be forced down with a small screw-driver or bradawl. The little projection must be dislodged. Take the new spring and, nipping

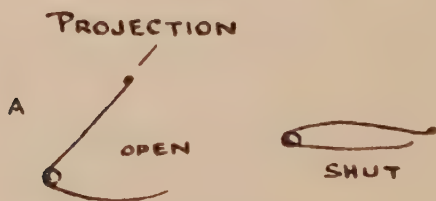


Diagram No. 11.

it together, push it in as far as you can with your fingers; then take a pair of small pliers and you can push it in, until it works the key correctly. Now take a screw-driver and press the little projection carefully up into the wood. That will prevent it from working out again. If the bellows burst, the only thing to

do is to carefully patch the holes. Glue some fine sheep's skin *inside*; sometimes, if glued on the outside, it is liable to be blown off, whereas inside it is pressed all the tighter against the bellows. Sometimes the bellows are badly damaged, and it is simply waste of time trying to repair them. Better obtain a new set if the melodeon is worth it, and otherwise a new melodeon altogether.

The most common things to go wrong with a melodeon are the reeds. In putting a new one in, first get the old rivet out by chipping off the head with a hammer and screwdriver, and the rest will probably drop out. At any rate it will require no great force to dislodge it. Select a reed tongue as near the size of the hole as possible, if not the exact size, a little bigger. Now file the sides down so as to make it fit exactly, and allow very little play from side to side, and trim the end off to the required length. Then file it down evenly all over with a metal file, taking a little more off the thin end than off the end with a hole in it. If you now hold it tightly in the pliers you will be able to judge by the note given

where you are. To sharpen a reed file the thin end down. To lower it, file the other end. When nearly right, a penknife used at right angles to scrape it will be best. Now take your rivet (a small French nail cut down will often do), and cut it so as to project above the reed and below the plate, carefully hammer the top a little, resting it on a vice or piece of iron, and then hammer the underneath part. The reed can now be moved into its exact place with a knife-blade. Try the note with the octave, and you will be able to tune it exactly to it by reducing the thin end for sharpening, or the other end to flatten. When the reed is in and is right, run some bees-wax down the side of the plate, so that no air can escape that way. People often think a reed is broken because it will not sound. There are many things which may prevent it from sounding. A particle of dust, or a splinter often offends in this way; or the piece of leather on the opposite side may have been sucked into the hole. If a reed will not speak when the melodeon is pulled out, the reed is on the in-

side of the plate. If it does not speak when pressed in, it will be found on the outside, or exposed side of the plate.

In a concertina the springs are somewhat similar to those in the melodeon, only smaller. They are easier to put in as they can be got at better. In a German concertina a reed can be put in exactly in the same way as in a melodeon. But in an Anglo-German or English concertina the reeds are constructed on a different principle. On opening an Anglo-German you will see a little case of compartments with a reed wedged in each. Before removing this make a pencil mark going from the case to the side of the concertina, so as to be able to put it back again in the right position. Now put your thumb in the hole in the middle, and pull the case out. Each reed can then be tested. This is easily done, as no riveting is required. Simply unscrew it and the old piece will drop out. When putting the new tongue in screw it as tightly as possible. A reed must never be right in the hole, but a little above the top; it speaks better then. When putting the reed case back into the con-

certina, do not push it quite home; but let the end do that as it is screwed on, then there will be no chance of wind escaping, as the partitions will be close up against the wood. New straps are easily put on, so that a word of caution is all that is necessary in this respect. When screwing straps on, and when screwing the end on, be careful that your screwdriver does not slip and go through the fretwork.

CHAPTER V.

**BRASS INSTRUMENTS AND WOOD-
WIND INSTRUMENTS.**

CORNET.—The commonest complaint in connection with a cornet is that of the valves sticking. To remedy this, unscrew the valve and lift it out. Take a duster or cloth and thoroughly clean it, removing any oil or sticky matter. By putting the duster round a pencil the inside of the valve can also be cleaned. Now moisten all over the lower part with saliva, and the valve ought to work well. If the spring is too weak, take it out and pull it out a bit so as to make it longer. That will also make it stronger. See

that no dust has collected in the hole of the mouthpiece. All the bends of a cornet should pull out. Any water can thus be emptied out that has not reached the water-key. It is inadvisable for an amateur to meddle further with a brass instrument. If a joint becomes unsoldered, or any part bruised, send the instrument to a maker and have it repaired properly.

In the case of a small *Straight Horn* becoming dented, that can be remedied in the following way. Cut a piece of wood to the shape of the inside of the horn, making it perfectly smooth and round. If this is hammered into the instrument gently it will gradually press the dent out.

Clarinet.—Not much can be said as to repairing this instrument. If the wood splits, it usually requires an entirely new piece to set it right again. The keys can be taken off by unscrewing the screw that fixes it to the pillars. When this is withdrawn the key can be cleaned. Scrape any grease off the little piece of metal that the spring works on, before putting fresh on. The spring can be strength-

ened by pulling it further off the key. Very little is needed to strengthen it. If a ring should come loose, it can either be glued, or some thread wrapped round the wood before replacing the ring.

In putting a pad on, first select one the exact size to fit in the hole on the top: put this over it and press it firmly on, so as to make an impression on the smooth side. If this presses out too much, put a smaller one on, and it will probably come quite right. They can be stuck in with either glue or secotine. When a clarinet reed has once got chipped it ought to be discarded at once. When the cork joints get worn down or broken, clean all of the old piece off thoroughly before putting on the new. The prepared cork can be bought, but you can prepare it yourself if you get a piece of *very good* cork about $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch thick. Wrap this round and cut it off, so as to make the join exact. Better a wee bit too small than a wee bit too big. You can press the small piece in to meet. Now glue it and tie some string round tightly until the glue sets. When it is set the cork can be

trimmed down with a *very sharp* knife first, and then sand-papered off to make it quite smooth. Leave it apparently too large. It will easily press in. If it should be too loose when finished do not lose time wondering what to do, but take it off and prepare a new piece.

CHAPTER VI.

MUSICAL BOXES, ETC.

WHEN taking almost any part out of a musical box it is always well to clean that part, and if many parts are taken out, why not clean the whole thing? Sometimes the "fly" will stick and will refuse to go round of its own accord. As a rule, if a little oil (almond) is applied to the spindles of each wheel, and to the top and the bottom of the "fly," with a pin or fine piece of wire, it will start again. If it still refuses to move, it ought to be thoroughly cleaned. Before undoing any screws the main spring must be run down, and the only way to do this is to

keep sending the fly round until it is run down. On the spring barrel at the left hand side there is a dial (see Diagram No. 12). If

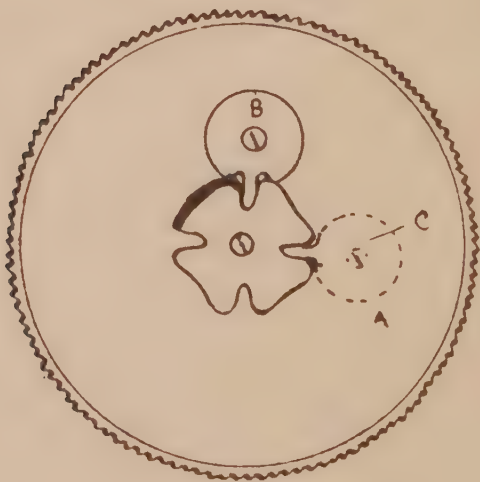


Diagram No. 12.

the little piece C is in the position A, then the spring is *not* run down, and nothing ought to be loosened until C is in position B. The penalty for undoing screws in this case too soon

will very likely include three or four teeth being broken out of the comb, to say nothing of cog wheels being stripped, and skin taken off the knuckles. I speak from experience, as

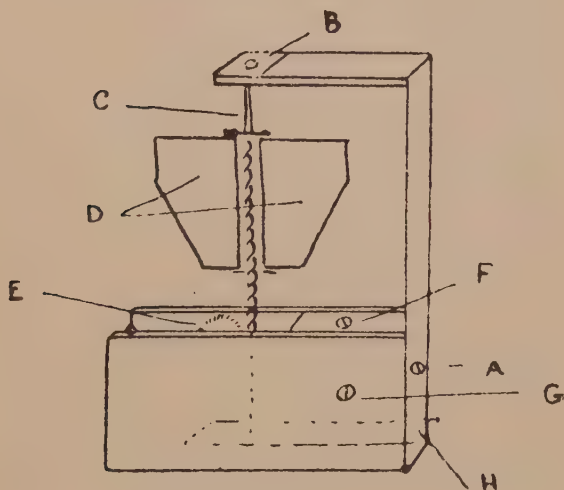


Diagram No. 13.

I once had a case of the kind. My mistake lay in not noticing this dial. As soon as it is quite run down, lift the barrel out. This is done by undoing the screws in the blocks at

each end. Lay it gently on some soft material, so that the pins do not get bent; when once bent they can never be bent back successfully. If they do not snap off in the operation they will shortly after. Clean the two blocks carefully and well. Plate powder ought to be used and a dry duster. Now see Diagram No. 13. This is a rough drawing of the fly and cog wheels in their case. This must be taken out by undoing the screw at F. Now take it to pieces, remembering exactly where you take each piece from. I usually lay them out in order before me, so as to correspond roughly with the shape of the thing. Undo screw at A, and the whole arm and elbow will lift off. Do not undo screws which hold the stone at B in its place. To get the cog wheels out, undo screw at side G. Be careful to replace these wheels directly you have cleaned them. Paraffin will clean them best. The plate powder is only intended for the bright parts. Thoroughly clean the worm of fly before replacing it. When clean, replace each part carefully and screw it up tightly. You will notice a screw at H. This regulates

the worm of fly at the bottom. If the cogs of the wheel next to the fly get worn at all, tighten the screw at H and it will bring the two nearer together. Having cleaned the fly, etc., screw it in again, and now turn to the other end. Undo the screws which hold the two supports of the spring box (screwed from underneath), and lift it out. Each one should be replaced immediately it is cleaned, so as not to mix them. Do not by any chance undo any screws on the side shown in Diagram No. 12. They must not be touched. If the main spring should be broken, send it to a maker to be repaired; a special machine is used to put these strong springs in. Never try to clean the comb. It may put it all out of tune. Also be very careful of the little springs under most of the teeth. The jarring so often heard in a musical box is nearly always caused by one or two of these being broken off. I have never seen any of these successfully repaired in England. Be very careful in putting the barrel in again. Some people put them back while the two end pieces (spring barrel and fly box) are out. If put-

ting it in under these conditions it is best to leave the screws at the end of the barrel a trifle loose, so as to get the cogs to fit properly. When in place, tighten all screws again. Never force anything into position, because by so doing you may undo all and more than you have already done. In cleaning and polishing bells, etc., be very careful not to bend any of the beaters, because they are attached to a few teeth in the comb and may easily be broken off. At the commencement of operations, lift out the wooden partitions in the box at the right and left hand sides, and undo all the screws which keep the base in position. These are usually found on the front and back sides of the outer, wooden, case. Next lift the whole of the inside out, but be very careful not to rest it on the underside of the barrel, or on the weights attached to the bass notes. The best way to clean the cylinder of a musical box, is to sprinkle a little dry plate powder on it and then carefully brush with a tooth-brush.

There must be no loose screws left, or they will produce an undesirable jarring.

MISCELLANEOUS HINTS.

Gut strings can be cleaned by rubbing them with vaseline. They also keep better by being so treated.

* * *

All gut strings should be kept wrapped up in oiled paper in an air-tight box; and if rubbed with vaseline will last much longer.

* * *

Banjo wire strings hold better if threaded through the hole in the peg twice instead of once only.

* * *

A sixpence or halfpenny placed under each foot of a banjo bridge will act as a mute.

* * *

Never allow the bridge on any stringed instrument to lean forward. It should always be kept straight. The pressure is then equally divided over the foot.

* * *

A good mandolin plectrum can be made out of vellum (or parchment); a good stiff piece being much better and more flexible than many of the tortoise-shell ones.

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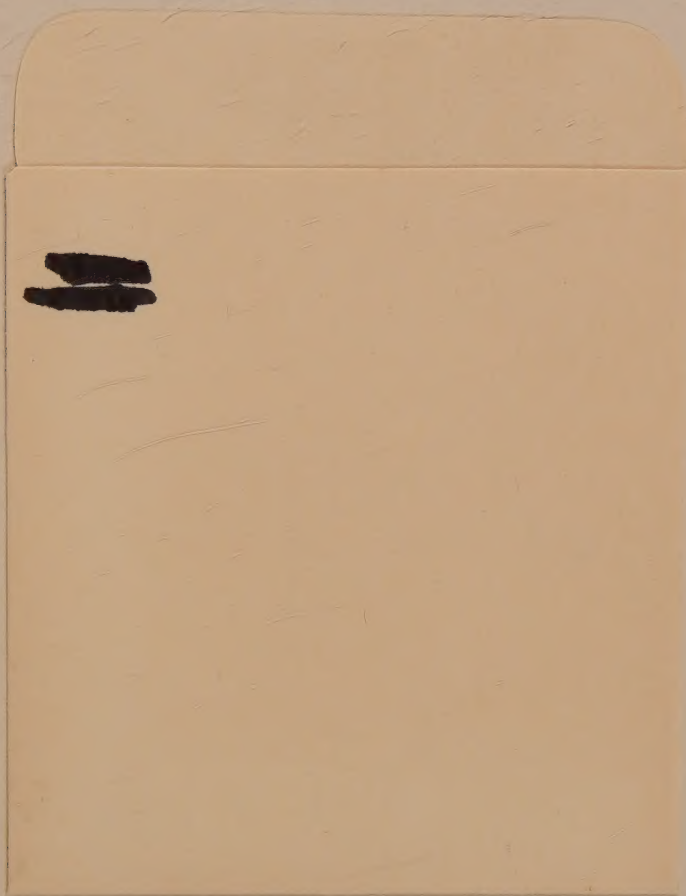
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